THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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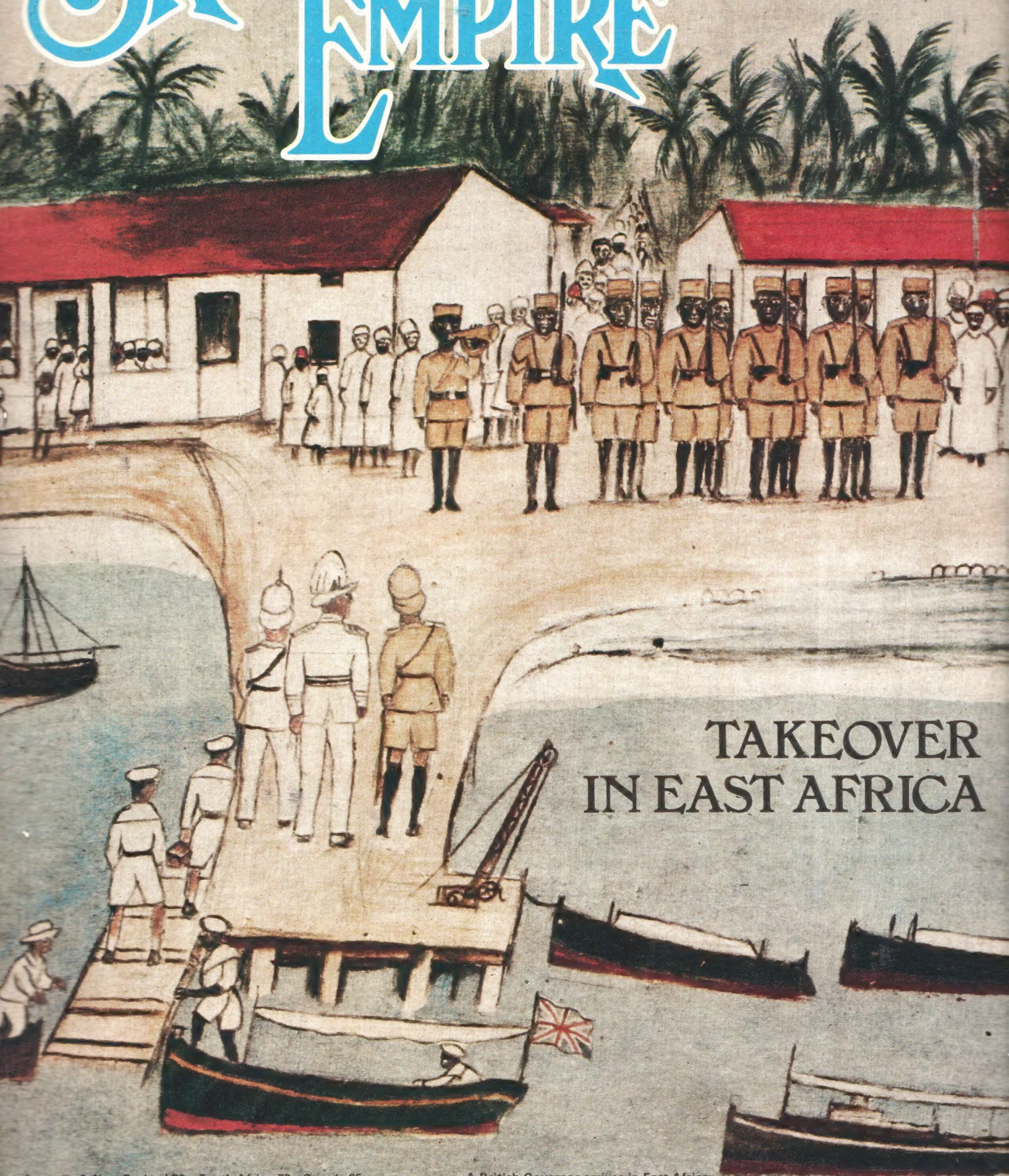

TAKEOVER IN EAST AFRICA

Australia & New Zealand 70c South Africa 70c Canada 95c

A British Governor arrives in East Africa

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BY THE WAY

One of the most dramatic tales in the building of the "Lunatic Line," the story of which is told in this issue, is that of the man-eaters of Tsavo. Here, 130 miles from the African coast, two ageing, wily lions acquired both a taste for human flesh and an almost uncanny ability to avoid the ambushes set up by the engineer in command, Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Patterson, whose best-selling *Man-Eaters of Tsavo* chronicled perhaps the most extraordinary stalk in the history of big-game hunting.

The hunt began in March, 1898, when one of the beasts carried off a Sikh servant from his tent before the eyes of his horrified comrades. Thereafter, for night after night, Patterson squatted in trees, hoping to bag the prowling lions. But time and again, the lions, as if warned of his presence, seized their prey from some other section of the camp, while Patterson listened in impotent rage to the roars and screams that pierced the darkness. Once, both lions struck together and brought their kill towards the spot where Patterson lay hidden. "I could plainly hear them crunching the bones," he wrote, "and the sound of their dreadful purring . . . rang in my ears for days afterwards."

Morale among the workers drained away. On December 1, 500 of them prostrated themselves in front of a coast-bound train, leaped aboard as it screamed to a stop, then vanished down the track in a cloud of smoke.

Construction came to a dead halt. Patterson, after months of daylight administration and night-time hunting, was near breakdown. Eventually, his persistence brought success: both lions sought to seize the prey tied to the tree in which he was waiting and fell to his bullets. In their 10-month reign of terror they had accounted for 28 coolies.

Patterson immediately became a hero to his workers. "Lions do not fear lions," sang one Indian in an epic composed in Patterson's honour, "yet one glance from Patterson Sahib cowed the bravest of them."

All letters please to: **The British Empire, 76, Oxford Street, London W.1.**

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Cover: In an African's drawing, a British Governor arrives after the First World War to take over control in Dar-es-Salaam, capital of former German Tanganyika.

TAKEOVER IN EAST AFRICA

By David Holden

In the ornate chambers of the British Foreign Office in Whitehall in the early 1880s, the clerks who registered the correspondence from Africa faced a difficulty both practical and symbolic: under what titles should they file this swiftly growing mass of dispatches? For nine-tenths of Africa there were virtually no archives at all, in sharp contrast to the elaborate filing systems covering the rest of the world. Only the dispatches from the British settlements in Cape Colony and Natal had a niche to themselves. As far as the filing clerks were concerned, the rest of Africa did not exist in their system.

In most other European capitals there was a similarly comprehensive neglect of Africa. The prevailing view of the Dark Continent was still that expressed four decades earlier by James Stephen of the British Colonial Office. "I cannot but think that even if our National resources were far more potent than they at present are, it would be very bad policy to employ in Africa that part of them which is available for Colonisation. . . . If we could acquire the Dominion of the whole of that Continent it would be but a worthless possession."

In support of Mr. Stephen's opinions, querulous missives of complaint about the lack of British aid and protection, penned by consuls and merchants in the 1860s and 1870s from Lagos or the Gold Coast, continued to be tied with pink tape and shelved under the general label of "The Slave Trade." Weightier correspondence from the eastern seaboard, full of anxious accounts of growing German influence and rival expeditions into the heart of Africa sponsored by an assortment of European powers, was often similarly disposed of. Most of what was left was filed under (and sometimes even actually sent to) Bombay.

The explanation for this odd procedure lay in the fact that Zanzibar, from which most of the East African correspondence came, was traditionally regarded as a mere outpost of the Raj in India. Even Egypt, where the gravest of Britain's African preoccupations were to be focused – upon the route to India, the vital security of the Nile Valley and the Suez Canal – had no file of its own. "Turkey" wrote the faceless men, shovelling the latest message from Cairo into their out-trays, for still, at that late date, the affairs of Egypt were seen in London – as they

had been for a century or more – as part of the long and as yet unfinished story of the Ottoman Empire's decline.

This huge gap in the work of Whitehall was, of course, no more than a mirror of the blank that was Africa in most of the minds and maps of Europe at that time. Before the last quarter of the 19th Century, Europe had only scraped the fringes of the Dark Continent. The British were entrenched in different ways at both extremities – Egypt and South Africa. On the west coast, also, they had a handful of small but old-fashioned commercial settlements from the Gambia to the Niger Delta, and in the east they had firmly installed themselves, through the assistance of the Royal Navy and the Bombay Presidency, as the friend and mentor of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

The French were similarly placed in Tunisia and Algeria to the north, in scattered trading colonies from Senegal to Gabon on the west, and in Madagascar and the Comoro Islands in the east. The Portuguese, too, had trading interests on both the eastern and western seaboards that went back three or four centuries into a more glorious past, and that would one day expand into the full-scale colonial enterprises of Angola and Mozambique. But in the late 1870s these were little more than a string of minor coastal forts and factories. And that was all. Except for the scattered missionaries and a growing band of explorers the only people of European stock to have moved into any part of the African interior were the Boers from the Cape who, by choice and conviction, no longer represented any government or empire but their own – and God's.

By 1900, however, only Liberia, Morocco, Libya and Ethiopia were left unannexed or uncontrolled by some European power; and of those, Liberia was already in the pockets of the European money-lenders, Morocco was spared for only another few years before the course of European diplomacy enabled France and Spain to gobble it up between them, while Libya although still nominally under Turkish suzerainty, and Ethiopia still officially independent were both threatened and would eventually be consumed by the ambition of Italy.

At first sight the motives behind this precipitate scramble into Africa seem puzzling. Even the man who did most to assert Britain's claims was uncertain what it was all about. "I do not exactly know the cause of this sudden revolution," observed Lord Salisbury in 1891 when, as Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister he had already master-minded the extension of British influence over half the continent in a matter of six years, "but there it is." Certainly no traditional reasons for British colonial expansion could account for it. The humanitarian sentiments of the anti-slavery lobby might cause British ministers and civil servants piously to wish they could do something about the remaining slave-trade in Africa, and they inspired many an earnest British newspaper and numerous outraged Bishops to flights of well-intentioned rhetoric; but no British government was ready to undertake a crusade on that score against the warring tribes and natural hazards that screened the heart of Africa from the world.

Nor was there much apparent likelihood of trade following the flag over most of Africa, still less of the flag flapping in the wake of non-existent trade. Only in the established colonies of the west coast and southern Africa were purely commercial interests important in determining the British government's intervention. In West Africa official action took place only after British merchants complained that French rivals were profiting from their government's protection while the British were left by Whitehall to soldier on in the painful purity of free trade. The response was a hesitant but eventually decisive extension of a similar British protection in the Niger Delta, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. In southern Africa the Kimberley diamond interests of Cecil Rhodes and the discovery of gold at Witwatersrand powerfully assisted a hesitant government towards the declaration of a British sphere of interest as far north as the Zambezi, for an answer was required to the German annexation of South West Africa and the persistent threat to British interests posed by the independence of the Boers.

The fundamental quality of both these moves, however, was protective rather than expansive. They expressed a desire to preserve what gains had already been made rather than the ambition to win new territories for their own sake. So it was, too, with Britain's other and apparently less profitable annexations in the great African scramble. Essentially, they were all part of a response to a change in the international atmosphere that posed new threats to British prosperity and power.

The threat to free trade in West Africa was one aspect of this change, for it indicated that Britain's industrial and trading supremacy was no longer absolute. As long as it had been, free trade and Empire had gone hand in hand, and British merchants could be left to open new doors and new markets without the politicians feeling bound to follow them. But with the emergence of serious commercial rivals in Germany, France and – at a distance – the United States, free trade threatened to become a liability. Instead of opening doors the imperialists now sought to close them.

The continuing decay of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of Germany, especially after her victory over France in the War of 1870, brought fresh complexities to the power game in Europe and multiplied, in British eyes, the threats to British supremacy in the Mediterranean and the Near East on which, above all, the security of the Empire in India depended. The defence of the new Suez Canal became a paramount British interest; to protect that waterway, vital to the maintenance of the Raj, even the hitherto unknown heartlands of Africa assumed for Britain a new and strategically important role.

Thus, Britain's part in the scramble for Africa was less a matter of action than of reaction. All the initiatives came from elsewhere – the first of them from that notorious royal entrepreneur, King Leopold II of Belgium. A ruler of a crafty but somewhat megalomaniac turn of mind, Leopold had nursed since youth a vision of imperial glory such as his little country could scarcely sustain. Now in his maturity he saw the unclaimed heart of Africa as the place in which his vision of personal empire might be fulfilled.

Under the cover of a supposedly scientific organization called the "International African Association," founded in Brussels in 1876, Leopold proposed to create for himself a personal commercial

Africa in 1891, largely divided among the European powers, contained many semi-official British "spheres of influence," like the Sudan, and company-administered areas, like the rich but uncolonized highlands of East Africa (see key). This area round the source of the Nile was a particular temptation to imperial rivals, and the smouldering tensions came to a head at Fashoda in a bitter Anglo-French clash.

empire that would span the continent. With that energetic explorer, Henry Morton Stanley, as his agent, he staked his claim between 1879 and 1884 to the greater part of the Congo River Basin. In the process he set off a series of protective claims and counter-claims from the other powers, whose rivalries he sought to turn to his own advantage. The Portuguese revived ancient claims to influence along the Congo. The French suddenly saw the possibility of linking their West African possessions with the upper basin of the Congo. The British were driven to protect their possessions from the French.

By the mid-1880s, when an international conference at Berlin recognized King Leopold's claim to the Congo, Europe's previous desire to stay out of Africa had been overtaken by a rising fever of annexation. Chancellor Bismarck of Germany was quick to see the opportunities for using Africa to secure his aims in Europe. Within 18 months, from the end of 1884 to the start of 1886, German claims to South West Africa, Togoland, the Cameroons and East Africa both alarmed the British and inflamed fresh French ambition.

For Bismarck, however, the claims were chiefly counters in the complex power game at home. By encouraging Anglo-French rivalry in Africa he could enhance Germany's standing at both ends of Europe: in the west, by helping France to forget in imperial adventure the humiliation of the war of 1870, and in the east by securing British acquiescence in his penetration of the Balkans in exchange for German support for Britain's position in Egypt.

And in Egypt another and very different sort of initiative simultaneously helped to change the nature, and the map, of the 19th-Century world.

The revolt led by Arabi Pasha, Egypt's first real nationalist leader, against the puppet régime of the Khedive Tewfik and his Anglo-French advisers was short-lived but crucial. By compelling even the reluctant Mr. Gladstone to send British troops into Egypt in 1882 it radically changed the balance of power in the eastern Mediterranean and committed succeeding British governments to a military policy along the Nile.

As elsewhere in Africa the British would have preferred to keep out. Through decades of earlier Anglo-French rivalry in the Levant they had relied upon diplomatic and commercial influence, whether with the Khedive in Cairo or the Sultan in Constantinople, to secure their position. But Arabi's revolt was a new phenomenon that required a new answer. The first sign of Middle Eastern nationalism, the revolt was another aspect of the comprehensive challenge to the old style of Empire, spelling, willy-nilly, the end of the policy of influence and the start of the policy of occupation.

The object of the British occupation of Egypt, as even Gladstone could see, was not the protection or subjugation of Egypt in itself but the defence of India. In that sense it took its place in the firm, historical line of British Near Eastern policy, from Nelson's battle at Aboukir, to the war in the Crimea against Russian expansionism, and to Disraeli's coup in buying the Suez Canal. But as the logic of defence drew first Gordon and then Kitchener even further up the Nile to Khartoum and beyond, challenging one rival power after another, it gradually enmeshed much of the rest of Africa, directly or indirectly, in the protective net thrown out by Britain round her Indian Empire.

Thus into Africa came Britain, Belgium, Germany and, once again, France, consoling herself for Britain's successes by extending her influence in North, West and Central Africa. The stakes – considerations of commerce, diplomacy and strategy – were piled one on top of another, as if the scramble was a gigantic poker game in which no player dared to leave it to the others to scoop the pool.

The Portuguese were shaken from their lethargy and sent soldiers and administrators to extend their old claims across the continent from the coasts of Angola and Mozambique. Cecil Rhodes dreamed of a Cape to Cairo empire that would cut the Portuguese in two and equal India in its riches. Italy snapped up Eritrea and tried to impose a protectorate on Ethiopia, while even that medieval kingdom extended its vague boundaries for a few years at the expense of its neighbours – the only African nation to take part in the scramble and the one destined to suffer perhaps the harshest of European conquests in Africa when Italy under Mussolini belatedly and brutally completed the process of annexation in the 1930s, more than half a century after it had begun.

For Britain, however, the most important chip remained, as always, India; and many of the government's actions in the partition of Africa were dictated ultimately by the demands of India's defence. It was not, therefore, in West Africa or even in the south that British policy was most active in gathering new imperial territories as the 19th Century ended. For all the advantages these territories possessed in terms of commerce, mineral wealth or existing British settlement, they took second place to the virgin uplands of East Africa where the stark compulsions of imperial strategy resulted in the last great extension of India's protective belt, its *cordon sanitaire*. Already British influence and diplomacy had stretched the *cordon* from Teheran and Constantinople to Cairo and Zanzibar. Now, as new threats began to sap the *cordon*'s strength, Britain had to replace influence by occupation and diplomacy by force and carry India's effective frontiers inland from the East African coast to the shores of Lake Victoria.

For the better part of a century, the power of British imperial influence was wielded over East Africa via the Sultan of Zanzibar. It was an influence that had begun in India. When Napoleon made his eastward thrust into Egypt, the officials of the Bombay Presidency looked urgently for local allies to thwart the new French menace. The Sultan of Muscat in south-eastern Arabia proved to be their ideal man, for the extension of his rule followed closely in the wake of his lucrative slave-trade. Borne by the monsoon winds his ships journeyed all the way from the Straits of Hormuz to the East African towns of Bagamoyo, Kilwa and Mombasa. These were the bases from which his slave-caravans raided the African interior as far as the great lakes. In Zanzibar and Pemba the Sultan's family had started the vast clove plantations that were to make those islands famous. By the nature of his far-flung activities, the Sultan was something of a naval man himself (his fleet was reputed to have 75 ships of the

line), and so he sensibly accepted the British overtures of friendship, persuasively supported as they were by the guns of the Royal Navy.

In 1798 the Sultan became the first Arabian ruler ever to sign a treaty with Britain; in doing so, however, he laid himself open to British interference as well as British aid. Thus, when the anti-slavery campaign in London prospered his commerce began to fail.

By the middle of the 19th Century the attentions of the Royal Navy and a succession of new treaties limiting the slave-trade had so reduced the state of Muscat that the Sultan of the day preferred to live in Zanzibar where at least the Navy could not interfere with the inland traffic in slaves from the African interior; there, too, he could profit from the growing Victorian interest in the ivory carried down by the slave-caravans from the rich hunting-grounds round the lakes.

Distance led to disenchantment, and in 1861 the Sultanate divided, leaving one impoverished Sultan in Muscat and another, rather richer, in Zanzibar, with British naval influence supreme in both.

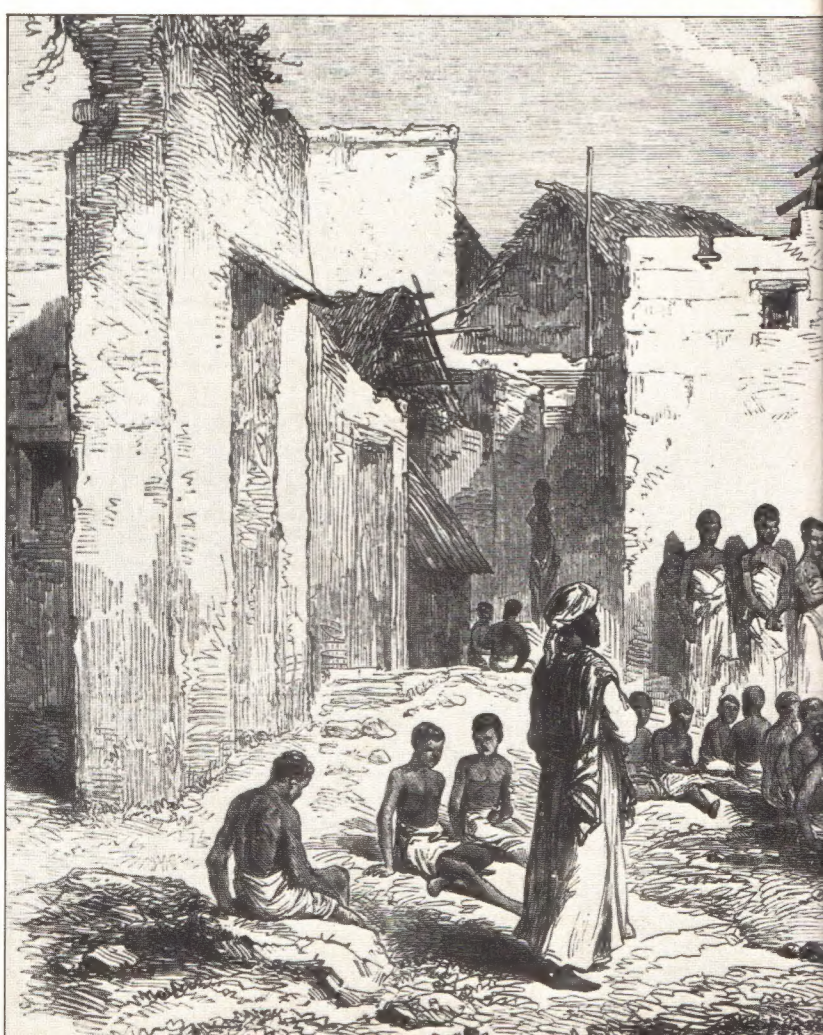
This 1884 cartoon sets the Berlin Treaty, which partitioned Africa among the European powers, in the context of its time. The treaty, later of vital importance in African and imperial history, lies with other imperial matters insignificantly at the feet of the Prime Minister, Gladstone. As an ambitious young Joseph Chamberlain measures Gladstone for his role as a popular party leader, the Prime Minister is beset by greater problems: the flames of Irish sedition, dissident bandoliered Boers determined to keep South African gold and an importunate electorate reminding him of his electoral promises of liberal reforms.

RESCUE FROM BONDAGE

In the mid-19th Century, the East African slave trade was dominated by the Sultan of Zanzibar. Britain, in accordance with her self-imposed duty, undertook to eradicate the trade.

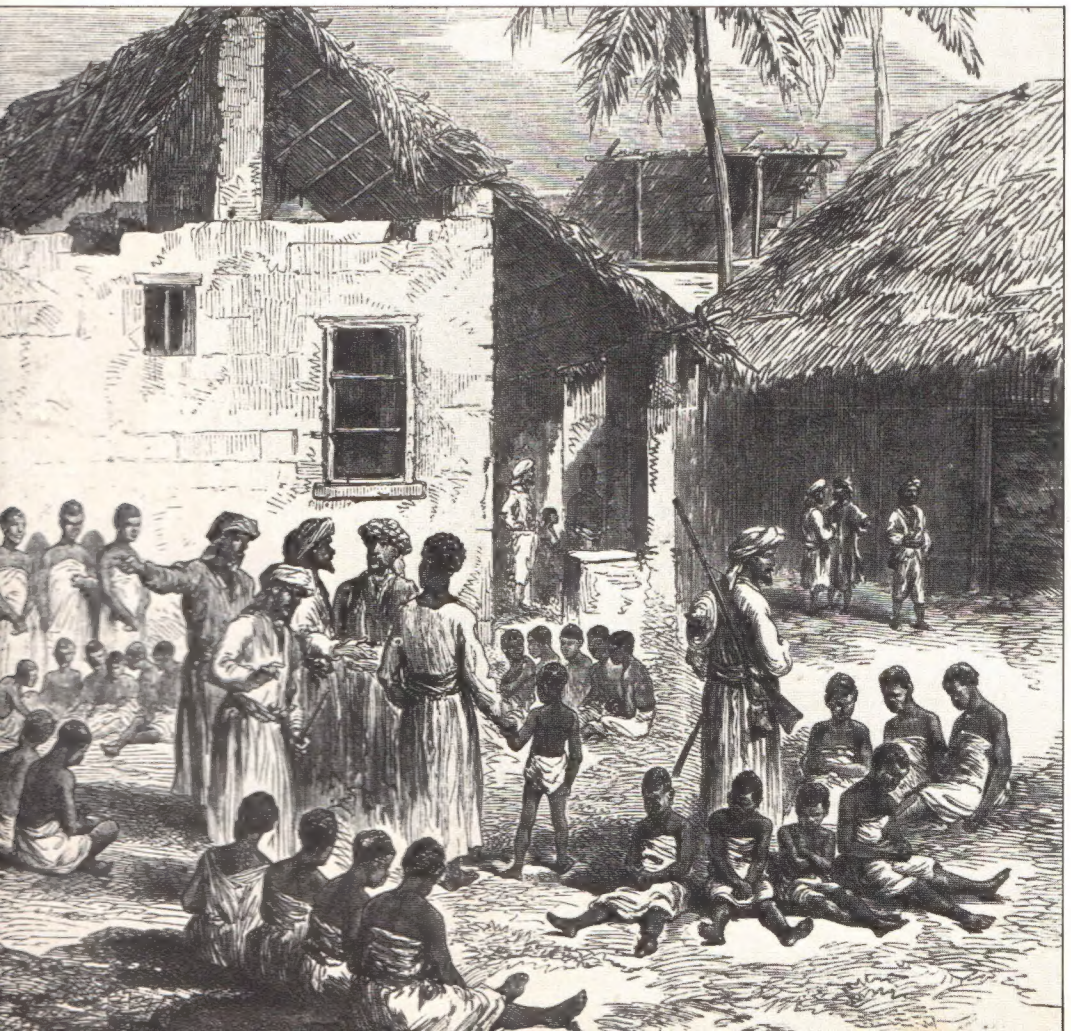
In 1845, Britain – with the power of her Navy behind her – pressured the Sultan into banning the export of slaves from Zanzibar. But his domains also included the East African coastline and Oman in Saudi Arabia, and the ban had little effect on the trade outside the island. Arab slavers still raided African villages. Coffles of slaves, secured by ropes and heavy poles, still wound their dismal way to the mainland coast. There, they were packed into dhows for export to Arabia, Persia, Turkey and Zanzibar, whose slave-market still supplied the island's own internal demands. Only at the end of the century was the trade utterly crushed.

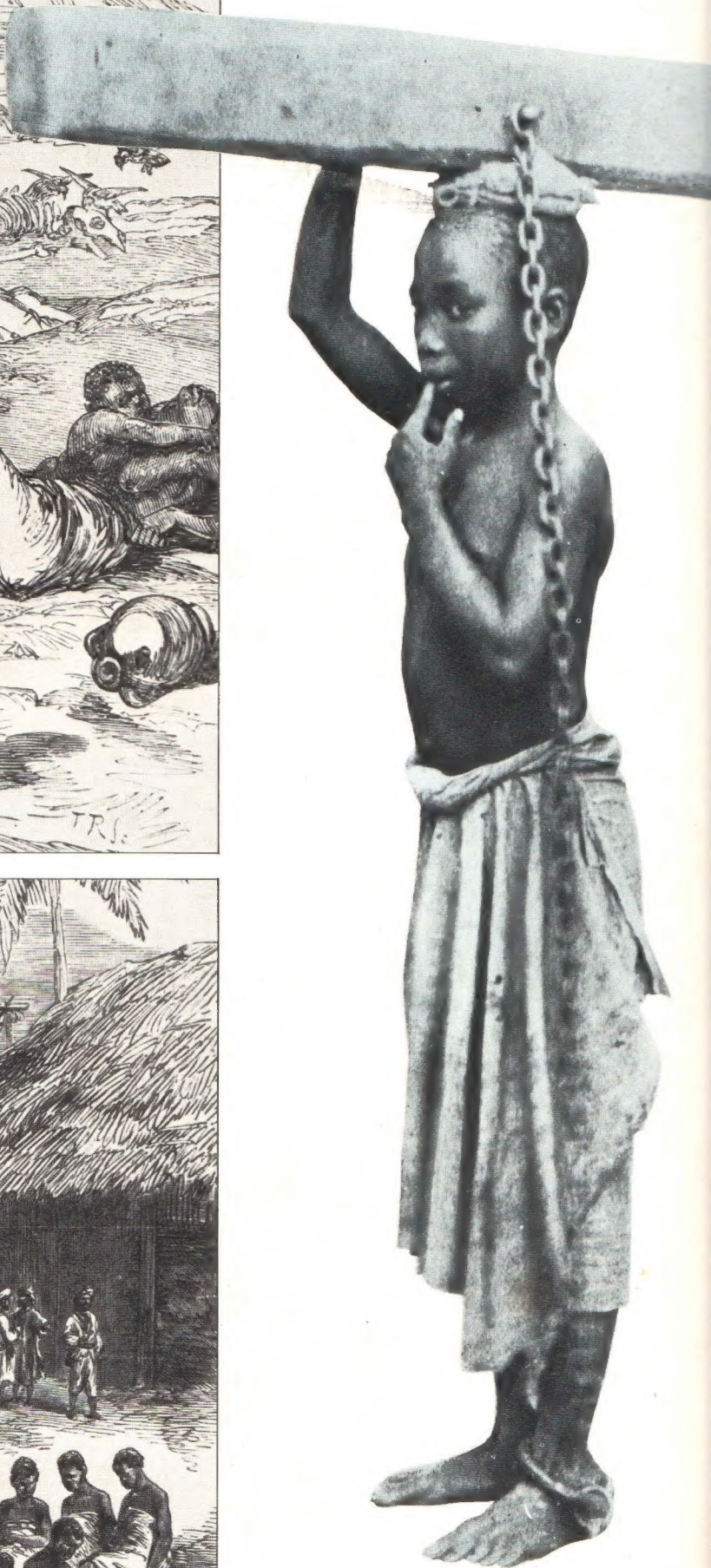
An Arab slave-dealer's grisly trade enabled him to dress in fine garments and to live in style.



The pitiful sights in the Zanzibar slave-market (right) so enraged English sailors they were kept aboard to avert violence.

Caravans of slaves marched hundreds of miles to the coastal markets. The sick (lower right) were left to die by the wayside.





Youngsters like this boy fetched very high prices, for when trained he could remain in service to his owner for many years.

Slaves from a captured dhow are released from their chains and shackles by sailors under the supervision of a British official.

Freedom for the Fettered

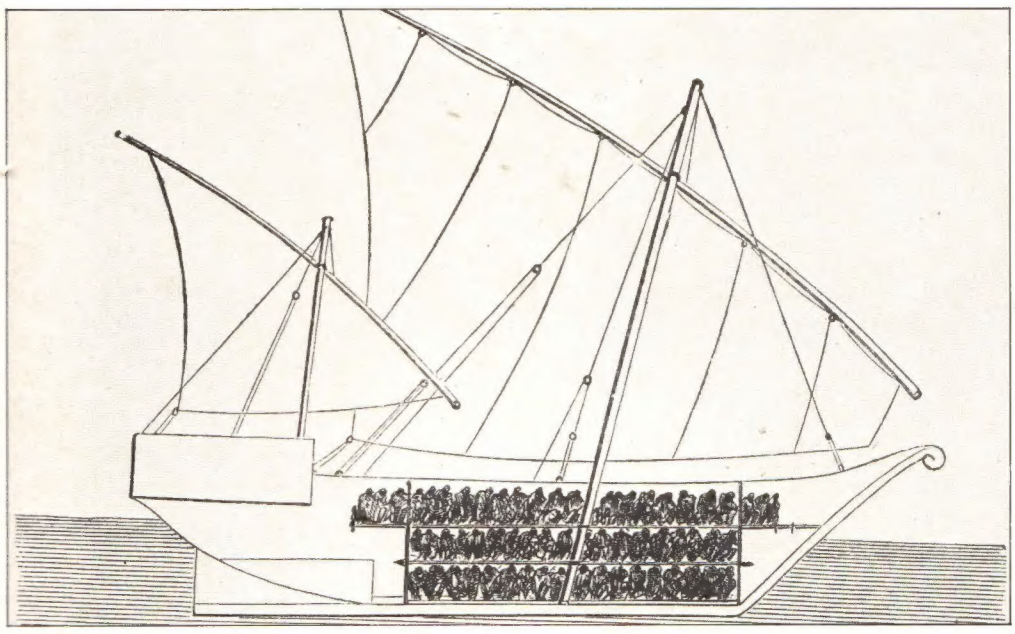
The black cargoes were seized in raids on villages, or acquired by barter; in Uganda a young girl could be bought for "a single elephant's tusk of the first class," a new shirt or 13 English sewing-needles. The new slaves were herded towards the coast, in tragic cavalcades like the one described by a companion of explorer David Livingstone: "I have myself seen bands of them – four or five hundred at a time – newly captured as one could see by their necks all chafed and bleeding, their eyes streaming with tears, principally young men of from 10 to 18 years, driven along in a most inhuman manner."

The first destination of the captives was the Zanzibar slave-market, a rough triangular open space in the ramshackle town, ringed round with the shabby huts of the slave dealers. There the slaves sat silent as death. Rubbed with oil to give a sleek dark appearance – a black skin was preferred to a copper one – the slaves were paraded and pinched and inspected, their pedigrees recited by the sellers to entice potential buyers. A male fetched between £4 and £5 and a woman usually more, though prices varied according to season and supply.

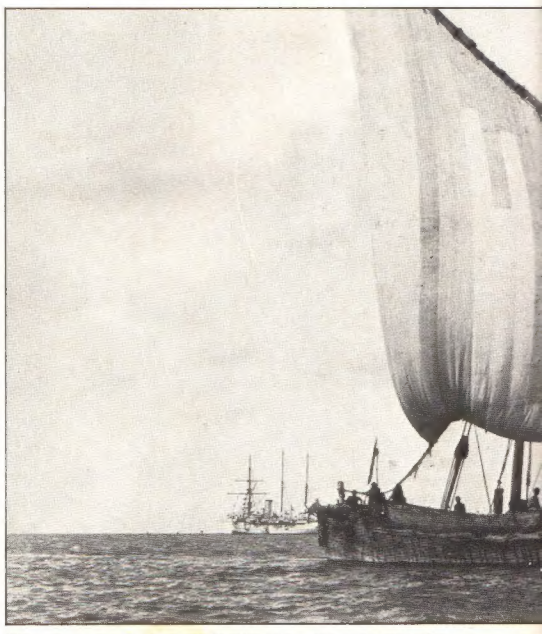
By the middle of the 19th Century the golden years of this grisliest of businesses trade were over. British ships patrolled the coast from 1845 on, capturing dhows and releasing slaves at the Cape of Good Hope or Seychelles Islands – far enough away to make their recapture difficult. In 1873, the slave-market was at last closed (and an Anglican cathedral erected on its site) when the Sultan Bhargash – after much diplomatic pressure by the economically dominant British – forbade slave-trading throughout all his dominions, in Zanzibar and on the mainland.

For another 20 years or so the determination and wiliness of the Arab dealers in Zanzibar thwarted Britain's efforts. Each year thousands of slaves were smuggled out to Arabia, Persia and Turkey in even worse conditions than before: as only a quarter of the dhows got through, dealers crammed in more slaves than ever to make the risk worth while. The explorer Richard Burton wrote that the ships "were built with 18 inches between decks, 1 pint of water a head served out per diem and five wretches stowed away instead of two."

Although the naval squadron was disbanded in 1883, captures were still being made at the end of the decade by individual naval vessels; the British ship *Penguin* boarded 15 dhows in eight months in 1888. Then in 1890 Zanzibar was made a British Protectorate and in 1897 the legal status of slavery itself was abolished. By 1907 – 70 years after slavery had been outlawed everywhere else in the British Empire – the export of slaves from East Africa was finally over.



A cross-section of a dhow shows how the slaves were stored to escape detection.



Crewmen of an Arab slaving dhow watch apprehensively as a Royal Navy ship appears.

English officials in Zanzibar kept a tight control on the administration of the Sultan of Zanzibar (centre) who only reluctantly agreed to the strict enforcement of slave-trading restrictions insisted upon by English administrators.

II. Bargaining for Imperial Security

In about 1860, a second British interest in the East African territories was established through the discovery of Lake Victoria Nyanza as the Nile's true source. Soon it was to become part of the conventional wisdom of Empire that whoever controlled Lake Victoria must also dominate Egypt; and meanwhile the revelations of the explorers about the extent and depradation of the Arab slave-trade added weight to the anti-slavery campaign focused upon Zanzibar.

Still the British government was not to be embroiled in wider responsibilities. With its customary thrift it continued to act only through its influence upon the Sultan in Zanzibar, leaving him to make British wishes felt, if he could, on the shores of Lake Victoria. The threat of a naval bombardment in 1873 induced him to sign a decree outlawing the slave-trade in all his lands and his slave-market in Zanzibar was closed to make way for a Christian cathedral.

Inland, beyond the Navy's reach, the trade went on; and it was not Disraeli or Gladstone but the visionary Khedive Ismail of Egypt who first undertook to combine the demands of security and morality by bringing the headwaters of the Nile under his own command and thereby, ostensibly, ending the traffic in slaves as well.

The Khedive's first agent in the dual task was Samuel Baker, discoverer of Lake Albert, appointed Governor-General of the Upper Nile by the Khedive in 1869, the year the Suez Canal was opened. His second was Colonel Charles George Gordon, raised by the Khedive to the rank of General. In 1874 Gordon, burning with Christian fervour – albeit in the service of a Muslim ruler – was sent up the Nile to bring the benefits of civilization to the benighted tribes of Central Africa. "You can scarcely conceive the misery and suffering," he wrote of the slave-trade from his base in the Sudan. "I declare, if I could stop this traffic I would willingly be shot this night."

Both Baker and Gordon were unsuccessful, for Egypt's resources were inadequate to the task and the Khedive's heart was never really moved by the misery caused by the slave-trade. A subsequent attempt by the Khedive to establish (at Gordon's suggestion) a base on the east coast from which the Upper Nile might be reached more easily brought the affair to a prompt end. In 1875, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, administered another dose of gunboat diplomacy, this time on Zanzibar's behalf. In this he relied on advice from India, where the Viceroy's officials felt they knew their Sultan better than their Khedive, and on the Foreign Office's increasing awareness that Ismail was overreaching himself everywhere and would not much longer enjoy his profligacy. The Egyptians were routed from the coast that Zanzibar still called its own, and the Sultan was delighted. "He thinks," reported the British Consul on the island, John Kirk, in amusement "that if Derby were a Mussulman he would have been a fit companion of the Prophet."

But the Egyptians had started something that could not be stopped. European merchants, government agents and adventurers swarmed into Zanzibar, fired by Gordon's attempt to link the east coast with the Nile headwaters, and urged on by the humanitarian claims of the anti-slavers. Leopold's International African Association sent one expedition after another to Central Africa from the Sultan's mainland ports. France tried to obtain special trading concessions. German missionaries, already established in the area that was to become known as Tanganyika, were joined by German explorers and government agents. The scramble had begun.

At first the Sultan was loyal to his old friends and mentors, offering a concession to a British company, headed by William Mackinnon, the founder of the British India Steam Navigation Company, to open up his dominions between Lake Victoria and the sea. But the negotiations failed when the British government refused to raise a penny of subsidy and Mackinnon realized how big was the task and how small the possibility of profit for a private concern.

Other governments were more forthcoming, especially Germany's; yet though Kirk in Zanzibar argued the danger to Britain if other powers succeeded, his masters in London were more complacent. By the early 1880s Gladstone was again in power, and reluctant as he had been to be sucked into Egypt by the Arabi affair, he was even more perturbed by the thought of tackling the unknown perils of East Africa.

A young botanist, Harry Johnston, later to become famous as the founder of British power in Nyasaland, tried to stake a claim on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and wrote glowingly of the prospects for white settlement in the temperate highlands. Others were equally enthusiastic about the fresh air, clear streams and rolling pastures of some newly discovered mountains further north, in what was later to be known as Kenya. A certain young Captain Herbert Kitchener reported that to defend British communications with the East and neutralize the growing German interest in the harbour of Dar-es-Salaam, Britain should fortify an east coast port of her own. With startling presight he suggested that Mombasa could be the terminus of a railway line that would penetrate the interior.

But Gladstone was moved only to magisterial bafflement. "Terribly have I been puzzled," he wrote, "on finding a group of the soberest men among us to have concocted a scheme such as that touching the mountain country behind Zanzibar with an unrememberable name." Far from being alarmed by reports of Bismarck's interest in the area, Gladstone was positively pleased to think someone else might take up the burden of civilizing Africa. "If Germany becomes a colonising power, God speed her," he said.

Yet in the long run, by accepting the Egyptian commitment Gladstone had effectively made the choice for East Africa as well, for as Gordon's plans had prophetically suggested and as the young Kitchener had confirmed, the two could not finally be separated. If Egypt's security was vital to the Empire then the configuration of the Nile demanded that East Africa ultimately should come under British rule.

It was Bismarck who first forced the British hand. Even while the international conference was meeting in Berlin at the end of 1884, ostensibly to define the limits of European expansion in Africa, a German agent named Carl Peters was travelling in the East African hinterland, meeting secretly with local chiefs to conclude treaties that threatened to transfer control of the whole territory out of the hands of the Sultan of Zanzibar into those of Germany. Before the conference was over in February, 1885, the German claim

continued on p. 1076

The Fashoda Crisis

When Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand emerged from the Sudan's fever-ridden swamps at Fashoda in March, 1898, to claim the Upper Nile for France, the British government recoiled in self-righteous indignation.

Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, ordered the British reserve fleet to prepare for action. His tough attitude was commemorated in the cartoon (above) which shows Salisbury, flanked by the ghost of Wellington, reminding an overbearing France of her defeat at the battle of Waterloo. France and Britain had been rivals for the Nile Valley since Napoleon's Egyptian campaign 80 years before, and the idea of a French triumph after so much time was intolerable.

Mass-circulation British papers, like the *Daily Mail*, labelled Marchand's forces "mere tourists" and the "scum of the deserts." Even more poker-faced, *The Times* accused France of "pretensions which are altogether inadmissible."

France seemed equally immovable. Delcassé, the French Prime Minister, said he "would accept war rather than submit." France's popular papers, too, responded in kind to the chauvinistic outpourings across the Channel. They accused the British of "insulting attitudes" and described Captain Marchand's arrival at Fashoda as one of France's most glorious achievements.

But neither side was as set on war as the sensationalist popular Press indicated. The storm died as quickly as it arose. France, now torn by the controversy surrounding Captain Dreyfus's unjust conviction for spying, renounced all her claims to the Nile Valley. She had, in the end, little choice: as Delcassé unhappily remarked: "We have nothing but arguments, and they have the troops." In 1904, when Anglo-French relations had startlingly improved, Fashoda was renamed Kodok to remove a word of national humiliation to the French.

to East Africa was announced and a German cruiser sailed for Zanzibar to force a *fait accompli* upon the Sultan.

Still London did not move. Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives, who had now replaced Gladstone and the Liberals in office, were more concerned about the struggle with France and Russia in the Mediterranean, and were ready to let Germany have her way in Africa in exchange for help in those apparently more vital matters. "I have been using the credit I have got with Bismarck in . . . Zanzibar," wrote Salisbury, "to get help in Russia and Turkey and Egypt."

But in 1886 it was Bismarck's turn to seek British support in a scheme to guarantee the stability of eastern Europe, and Salisbury's turn to play the tough banker. His Lordship's price was the abandonment of the German colonial campaign; and Bismarck, always more interested in making Germany the pivot of Europe rather than the mistress of an empire, turned his back on the indignant Carl Peters and negotiated an agreement that effectively divided East Africa into two. The Sultan's position was reaffirmed in the islands and on a truncated strip of the coast, while Germany was granted a sphere of influence in the southern zone of the hinterland and Britain's influence was secured in the northern zone.

Now at last the British began to move – though slowly still. Unwilling as ever to raise government money for colonial administration, they granted a charter to Mackinnon's company and urged it to push ahead in occupation and exploitation of the British sphere. But the Imperial British East Africa Company was an ailing infant from the start. Starved of support by its own government in an essentially profitless and lawless territory, it could make little of the impact that its contemporaries were achieving in the more fertile commercial fields of western and southern Africa. Within five years it was bankrupt, having spent half a million pounds for practically no return. By 1895 the government was forced to withdraw its charter and declare the northern territories of East Africa a protectorate under government administration.

Long before then, however, the logic of imperial strategy had forced the British Government into unaccustomed paths in Africa. The continued decline of Turkish power in Constantinople and correspondingly growing fears of Russian advance into the Near East as part of the encirclement of India had made Egypt all the more important to Britain. The security of the Nile was deemed essential; but the Mahdi's victory over Gordon at Khartoum had cut off the mouth from the source, leaving the headwaters dangerously exposed.

As long as no European power threatened to settle astride the Upper Nile, there was probably not much to worry about, for the Dervishes themselves were not likely to hold Egypt to ransom. But suppose France or Germany were to get at the source of the Nile? Visions of skilled engineers turning off the waters like a kitchen tap seemed to haunt the British Cabinet. And Carl Peters, it seemed, was up to his old tricks again – this time signing treaties all round Lake Victoria on behalf of the German commercial company that was now operating with German government support throughout Tanganyika.

That was enough for Salisbury. He declared the entire valley a British sphere of influence, and between 1889 and 1892 he made his decision stick by intimidating or cajoling all Britain's rivals into mutual definitions of interest throughout the rest of Africa. With Italy he fixed the frontier between British East Africa and the new Italian colony in Somalia. To limit Portugal and her colony in Mozambique he threw Britain's weight behind the Rhodesian pioneers and Protestant missionaries in Nyasaland, thus creating a solid block of British territory from South to Central Africa. To the French he made concessions in West Africa in order to hang on to the Nile and the east; however, by leaving the inland frontiers of French West Africa undecided he left the door open to the Anglo-French confrontation at Fashoda in 1898 after which British supremacy upon the Nile was finally confirmed.

With Germany he made his biggest and best deal. Bismarck had fallen and his complex system of alliances guaranteeing peace in the East had been allowed to lapse. Germany once more was seeking Britain's help against Russia. Salisbury bargained the island of Heligoland in the North Sea, delivered to Germany for a naval base, against a settlement of most of the Anglo-German frontiers in Africa, including the recognition of a formal British Protectorate in Zanzibar and the removal of all German influence from Uganda. Carl Peters was appalled. "Fancy sacrificing two African kingdoms for a bath tub in the North Sea!" he exclaimed.

As a result of Salisbury's various bargains, the strategy of supremacy on the Nile reigned supreme in Britain's African policies. All that remained to complete Britain's role in the sudden partition of the continent was for the new policy of occupation, already entrenched in Egypt, to replace the old policy of influence elsewhere. The British were still reluctant to take that plunge. Shackled by Treasury caution and the spectre of the taxpayer's hostility to imperial expense, they continued to hope that strategic necessities might be met by private enterprise or by friendship with local potentates.

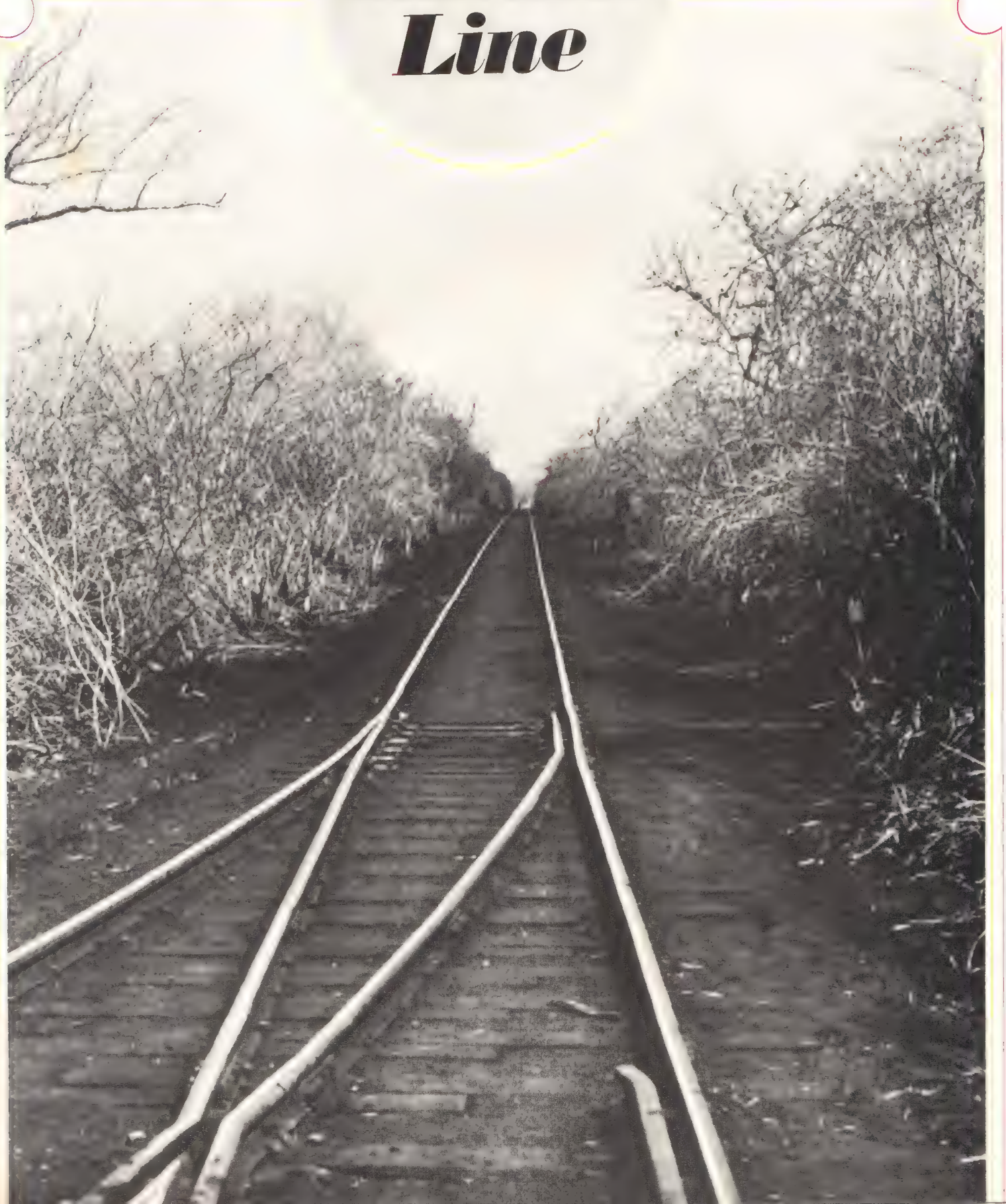
The defeat of those hopes was inevitable as the fever of African annexation mounted. Having fought off the German assault on the headwaters of the Nile by shrewd diplomacy, it was not long before Britain was compelled to frustrate another attack by sheer force.

As the power of the Mahdi in the Sudan waned, the Italians in Ethiopia, Leopold in the Congo, and the French in West and Equatorial Africa all began probing towards the no man's land of the Sudan. Still haunted by their nightmares of the Nile being turned off, the British in 1896 sent Kitchener hurrying southwards from Egypt, ostensibly to revenge the death of Gordon, 11 years before. But the railway he built into the desert as he went had long-term strategic significance.

Meanwhile, on the east coast, earlier visions of policing the Nile source from a base in Zanzibar were at last given substance. In 1896, with the moribund East Africa Company already swept aside and a full British Protectorate proclaimed in Kenya and Uganda, the government embarked on the project that Gordon had foreshadowed, that Kitchener had recommended, that the East Africa Company itself, indeed, had pleaded for in vain – a railway from the coast to Lake Victoria.

The Lunatic Line

Obsessed by the need to protect the source of the Nile, the British began to build a troop-carrying railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria in 1896. It was a scheme of almost reckless over-confidence. The nearly impassable country (below) soon made nonsense of time and cost estimates. As the Uganda Railway – nicknamed the "Lunatic Line" – inched forward it raised a storm of criticism and ridicule in London.



Onward at Snail's Pace

The government hoped that the first 100 miles of track would be ready in a year and the whole railway completed by 1900. An acute shortage of African labour was overcome by importing 32,000 Indian coolies. But the debilitating coastal climate, mountainous terrain and tangled thorn bush, infested with tsetse-fly, played havoc with the optimistic schedules. By 1898, when a completed railway could have saved Kitchener his southward march to confront the French on the Nile at Fashoda, only 100 of the 582 miles of track were laid. The next 200 miles progressed no faster: man-eating lions and enraged rhinos terrorized the construction teams as they hacked and blasted their way towards the lush Kapiti Plains and the Nairobi site of the railways headquarters station.

By now Parliamentary criticism of the "Lunatic Line" was becoming increasingly fierce and the Foreign Office in London ordered the Chief Engineer to redouble his efforts and hurry towards the lake. Temporary viaducts, bridges and short cuts speeded the railway towards its goal, but there was no sidestepping the greatest single obstacle in its path – the Great Rift Valley.

The route of the Uganda Railway (above) was intended to impress France and Germany with Britain's ability to defend the headwaters of the Nile.

A traction-engine, one of the few large pieces of equipment used, proved an invaluable addition to coolie labour for hauling heavy loads and levelling rough surfaces.

An inspector, sitting on a trolley pushed by coolies over newly laid sections of track, checks that the rails are accurately positioned and firmly secured.

Indian coolies pose with raised hammers while others assist a British surveyor whose theodolyte is carefully shaded from the sun.

Across the Great Rift Valley

On leaving Nairobi the railway climbed steadily to the summit of the Kikuyu Escarpment before plunging down into the Great Rift Valley. As a temporary measure – until the erection of viaducts removed the most precipitous gradients – specially constructed platforms were winched down into the valley with wagon-loads of stores and construction materials. After crossing the valley floor the railway gradually climbed the western wall of the Rift Valley, and descended the final 100 miles to the shore of Lake Victoria.

Although the first locomotive steamed into Port Florence on December 20, 1901 – a year behind schedule – the temporary works were not replaced by permanent structures until 1903, when a total of £5,000,000 had been spent on the line. The cost in human terms, too, was high: 2,500 coolies died and 6,500 were injured during construction. But they, like the original justification for the line, were soon forgotten as white settlers moved in.

The angled platforms (above) that bore men and equipment up and down the 1,500-foot eastern wall of the Rift Valley (left) terminated at docking-bays so that the supply-wagons could run off on to level tracks.

The trains that at last rode over the hastily built trestle-bridges forestalled no threats to the source of the Nile; but

they did bring trade and European settlers, and they established Britain's rule in Kenya and Uganda for 60 years.

III. Playground for Aristocrats

The Uganda railway was sold to the electorate at home with customary piety as a means of suppressing the slave-trade. But slavery by then was already dead or dying throughout East Africa and the railway's real purpose was to get British troops into Uganda to forestall foreign threats to the Nile.

In the event, that final triumph went, after all, to Kitchener marching south to outface the French under Marchand at Fashoda, for the railway from the east took far longer to build than anyone had expected. There was no local labour for the work and 32,000 indentured coolies had to be brought from India to live in a succession of diseased and fly-blown shanty towns along the line – the origin of East Africa's Asian problem that today still plagues Kenya and Uganda.

The terrain and the climate both proved harder than they looked: barren scrub and clubbing heat on the coastal plain, ice-cold nights in the highlands, and a series of immense physical barriers. Up, first, 7,000 feet into the mountains. Down, precipitously, 1,500 feet to the Rift Valley floor. Up again to 8,500 feet on the top of the Kikuyu Escarpment; and finally another drop through malarial jungle country to the shores of Lake Victoria. As the work dragged painfully and expensively on, critics in London talked of "The Lunatic Line" and ministers ruefully recalled the wisdom of their predecessors in refusing to be trapped into such an undertaking.

It was not until 1899, a year after Kitchener had reached Fashoda, that the railway entered Nairobi, a mere 300 miles from the sea. It was 1901 before the next 500 miles to Kisumu and Lake Victoria were completed, and another quarter of a century passed before the last stretch to Kampala, on the other side of the lake, was finished – long after the line's original strategic purpose had been buried in the Whitehall archives.

But in the meantime it had acquired other purposes of its own. Once built it transformed the prospects of the territory, for along with the rails came at last all those benefits of civilization that the imperialists and humanitarians were united in wishing to bestow upon Darkest Africa. This, to begin with – like much else in the Empire – derived from a simple matter of governmental frugality. The shadow of Samuel Smiles and his Victorian

This tusk, half of the largest pair recorded, weighed 225 pounds and was 11½ feet long – a fine example of the prizes that drew European traders to East Africa.

philosophy of self-help were by no means passing with the century that had bred them; and having paid for the line, the British government's firm resolve was that the taxpayer should not be asked to subsidize its operation as well. Somehow it must be made to pay for itself.

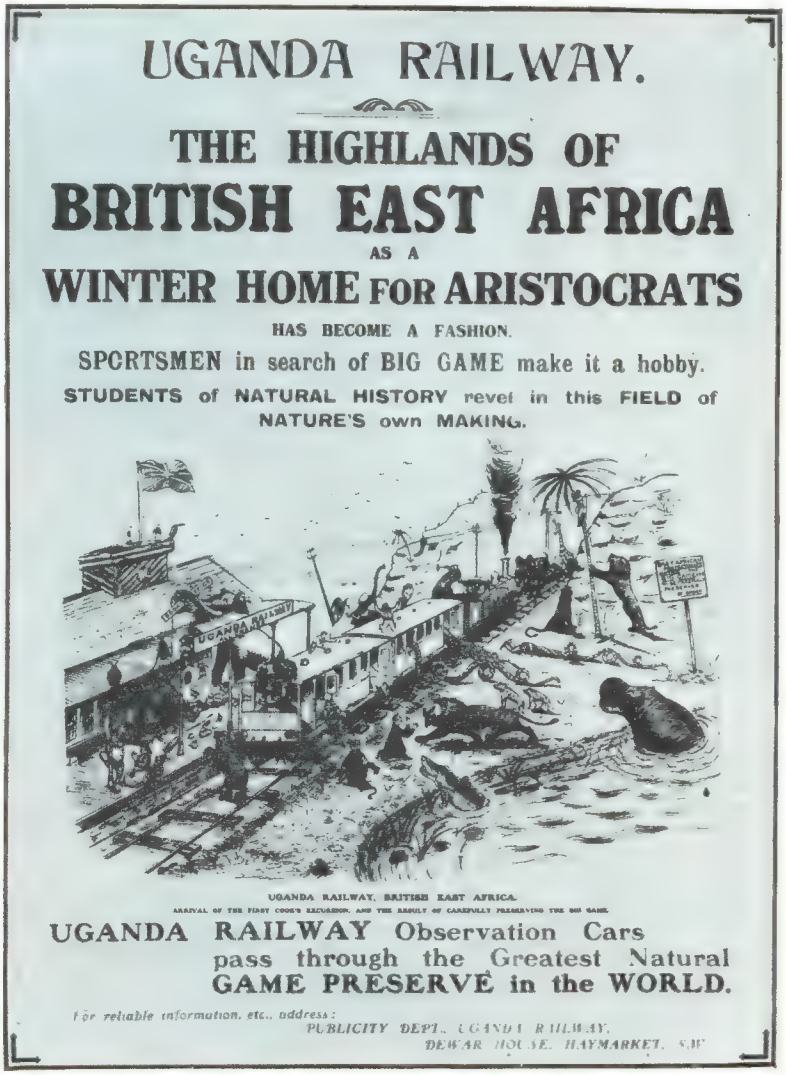
So strategy was turned at last to the ends of commerce and as the new century opened East Africa became the latest horizon of British colonial settlement. Many had suggested such an outcome ever since Harry Johnston first tried to establish himself on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, nearly 20 years before. But without the investment and protection that only the British government could supply in a territory both dangerous and inaccessible, none had been able to do more than dream. Now the dream was a financial necessity. It had become clear that although the railway generated new trade among and with the Africans, in skins, rubber and beeswax as well as the eternal ivory, that alone could never make it a paying proposition or supply the taxes that were needed to pay for the administration of the territory through which it ran. Only the richer trade that Europeans engaged in could do that, and the British government accordingly bent its efforts to creating European trade as soon as possible by deliberately encouraging white settlement.

This change of emphasis was apparent almost before the railway was completed. The new approach was given formal recognition in 1905 by the transfer of authority for the East African territories from the Foreign Office, with its characteristic concern for imperial strategy, to the Colonial Office which, under its new minister, Joseph Chamberlain, combined a sagacious interest in the hard cash of colonial budgets with a visionary sense of Britain's colonizing mission.

In idealistic terms, that faithful servant of the Empire in Africa, Lord Lugard, had already summed up this new approach with his definition of what he called the "dual mandate." "On the one hand, the abounding wealth of the tropical regions of the earth must be developed and used for the benefit of mankind; on the other hand, an obligation rests on the controlling Power not only to safeguard the material rights of the natives, but to promote their moral and educational progress."

Unfortunately, there was a basic, although as yet unseen, conflict here, for

Piles of tusks in London warehouses provided solid proof that British investments in East African trade would be amply repaid.



The Uganda Railway – the "Lunatic Line" – light-heartedly advertises the aristocratic pleasures of East Africa's undeveloped highlands.

This view of the formal reception for a new Governor, painted by an East African artist, shows the placid acceptance of British rule.

while the first aim was bound to involve increasing white interest and control, the second was certain to evoke growing demands from the Africans. The history of East Africa over the next half-century was to prove how disastrously unavoidable this clash would be.

To start with, however, the two aims seemed to find appropriate expression in the complementary courses taken by Kenya and Uganda, the two component territories into which the original East African Protectorate was divided in 1904 prior to the Colonial Office take-over. Kenya was opened to white settlement, with the exploitation of apparently virgin land as the primary aim. Uganda, on the other hand, was designated an exclusively African country, where white ownership of land was prohibited and the progress of the native inhabitants was paramount, however slowly achieved.

At the time this division appeared fair enough. Uganda was naturally richer than Kenya and had a more highly developed African society, but it was physically less suited to white colonization. In Kenya, Gladstone's "unrememberable" mountain country continued to tempt adventurous and visionary white men looking for new frontiers to conquer – especially as it seemed to be half-empty anyway, even of native farmers. Thus the legal separation of the two seemed to follow the laws of nature as well as the demands of colonial budgets. Humanitarians and imperialists alike declared themselves satisfied.

Even so, it was not easy to find the right people in sufficient numbers to colonize Kenya and make its wretched railway pay. What with the tsetse-fly, the lions, the terrain and the Equatorial storms, not to mention the ever-present fact that cattle-stealing was sanctified by tribal tradition, farming in Kenya was apt to prove a shorter way to bankruptcy than to riches. In its anxiety to fill the unprofitable spaces, the government was forced to offer highly favourable terms to potential settlers. Hence the readiness to hand out huge areas of land at bargain prices – or at virtually no cost at all – that was characteristic of Kenya in its early years; and hence, too, one of the more bizarre episodes of Britain's imperial history.

When half of Kenya's White Highlands were offered to the Zionist Congress in 1903 as a National Home for the Jewish people, the offer was seriously debated. It was only finally rejected by the Jewish leaders two years later because they saw, as the British did not, that Zionism without Zion, and under British colonial rule, really did not make much sense.

In fact, the settlers who came to Kenya at first tended to be the rich romantics – men who were both ready to rough it and able to spend a good deal of money doing so. A large number were the younger sons of titled county families. Many more were peers and ex-army officers. An early historian of the colony, Lord Bertram Francis Gurdon Cranworth, stated that the highlands had been tailor-made for the products of the British public schools, men who had been fitted "not for work, but the overseeing of work."

This was somewhat unfair, for adherence to the snobbish trappings of aristocracy – footmen, racing stables, mansions – was not going to get the ground cleared of scrub, thorn and concrete-hard anthills. The aristocracy was as much one of character as one of birth. A blacksmith or a ploughman was readily accepted if he was "the right sort."

What was "the right sort?" Hard-working, tough, good with a gun – fair game for a couplet of the time that ran:

Kenya born and Kenya bred
Strong in the arms, nothing in the head

but also generous in spirit, and willing to undergo considerable privation for the freedom to build a new home in this beautiful country. Such a one was Hugh Cholmondeley, third Baron Delamere, of Vale Royal in the county of Cheshire, who became one of the first and most

influential of all of Kenya's influx of bustling white settlers.

Like so many of the young British aristocracy of his day, Delamere was a great sportsman and a bit of a rip. At Eton his high spirits often led him surreptitiously to the neighbouring Ascot racecourse. Once, with a young cub's arrogance, he was inspired to wreck a boot-shop in Windsor High Street and throw the unlucky proprietor's stock to the indulgent populace. As a young man he inherited his title along with a sizeable fortune and a hunting-stable, and he got fun out of all three.

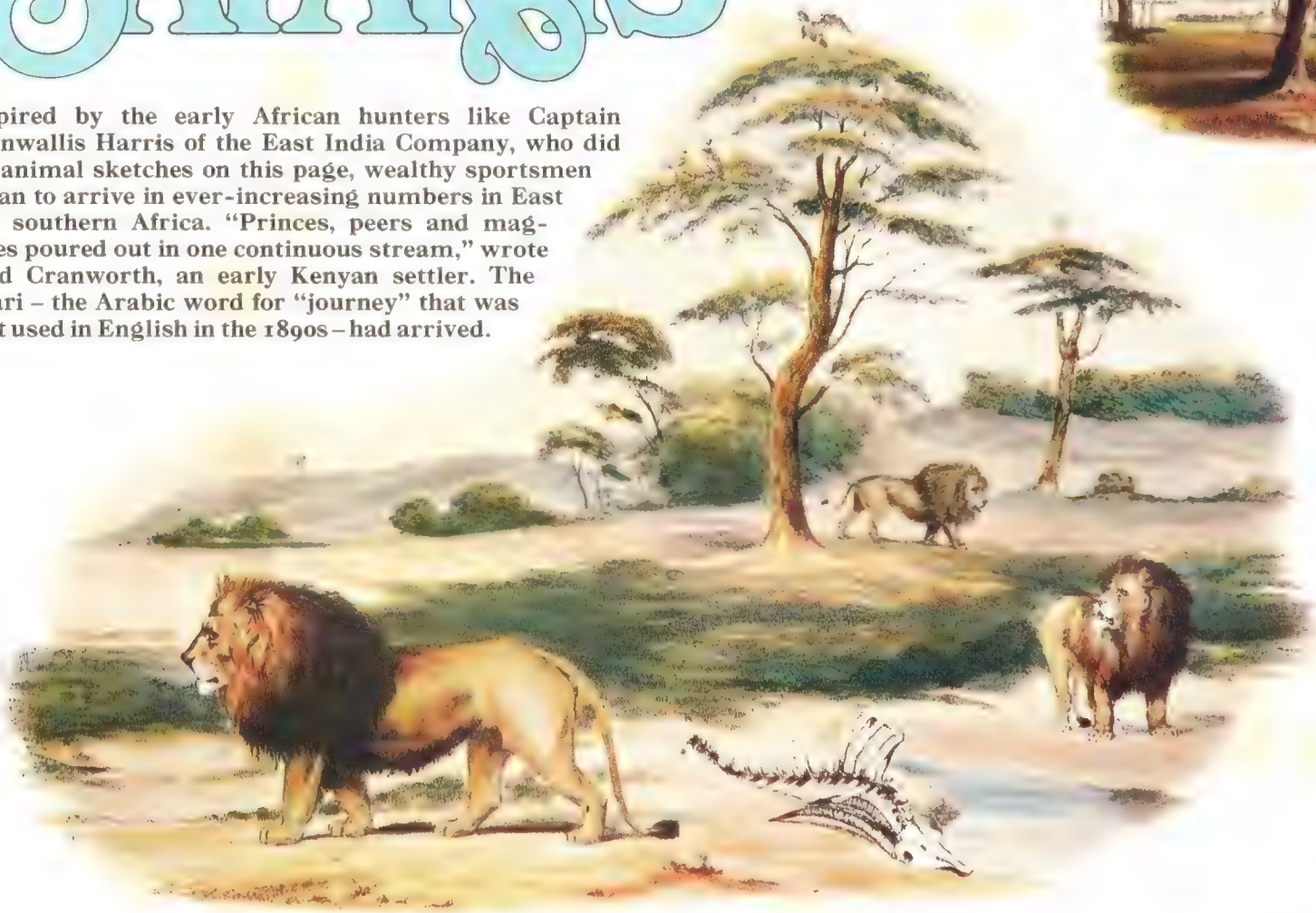
It was the big game that lured Delamere to Africa. He organized four hunting-trips to Somaliland between 1891 and 1895. Then, after his fifth trip through the barren Somali Desert in 1898, he found himself exploring in northern Kenya, viewing with disbelieving joy the cool, green slopes of the highlands. Four years later he was back among those hills for good, inspired by the dream of an African Arcadia where the sheep might safely graze, the huntsmen ride and the wheat-fields spread to the horizon.

He was not, to begin with, far wrong. The government welcomed him with open arms. In 1903 he was granted 100,000 acres at Njoro on the floor of the Rift Valley. Zebra and wildebeest ran there in thousands. Giraffe sauntered beneath the yellow-barked fever trees and lion hunted by the water-holes. Not far away, on Lake Naivasha, flamingoes in uncounted numbers rimmed the water's edge with pink. For Delamere it was heaven. He called his farm "Equator Ranch" and made it the first symbol of the white Kenya that was emerging.

The peculiarly romantic and expansive character of Delamere's vast holding, compounded of the new frontier and an old feudalism, the dawn of a country and the twilight of a social class, stamped itself upon many of his successors. "Officers to Kenya, Other Ranks to Rhodesia," they would say complacently in the Nairobi Club in later years to mark the essential difference in the settlement of the two countries. And despite all the other ranks who eventually came to Kenya and all the officers who later went to Rhodesia, there was always a core of truth in this typically British distinction of social class. It was as if Cecil Rhodes, the archetypal upstart of his day, had somehow set the grasping, middle-class tone of white Rhodesia forever, while Delamere, the flamboyant aristocrat, had made white Kenya carefree and nonchalant ❧

THE FIRST SAFARIS

Inspired by the early African hunters like Captain Cornwallis Harris of the East India Company, who did the animal sketches on this page, wealthy sportsmen began to arrive in ever-increasing numbers in East and southern Africa. "Princes, peers and magnates poured out in one continuous stream," wrote Lord Cranworth, an early Kenyan settler. The safari – the Arabic word for "journey" that was first used in English in the 1890s – had arrived.



The "heads" most prized by the hunters were the lion (far left) and the elephant (above). The lion, lured by bait of freshly killed gazellé, had great status as "king of the beasts"; and the elephant's valued tusks could recoup the whole cost of a safari. The grotesque gnu (above, centre) was hunted more for curiousity value, and the vicious little warthog (left) was either no more than target practice or was left to become, perhaps, a victim of an afternoon's pig-sticking.

Porters in single file – at least ten of them for each hunter – carried tents, arms and food. For themselves, the porters brought a daily ration of three pounds of maize which they mashed and made into a kind of porridge.

Package Holidays for "Headhunters"

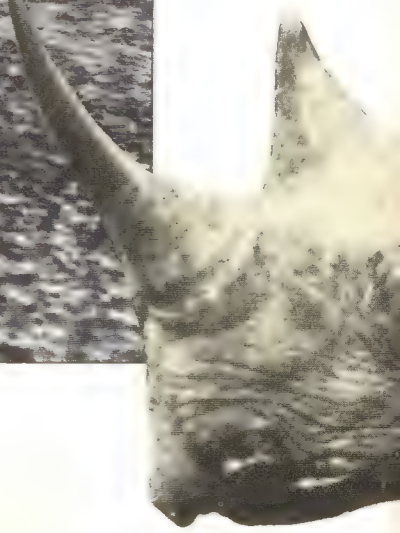
The Uganda Railway, completed in 1901, opened up the verdant plains and game-filled plateaux of East Africa to the white hunter. His safaris – which required tropical hats, thigh-length mosquito boots, guns, food and the indispensable native porters, guides and trackers – soon became professionally organized "package holidays."

Perhaps the most famous of the early big-game hunters was the former American President, Theodore Roosevelt, who went on safari in 1910. He hugely enjoyed the still-challenging conditions and even complained: "Our tents and our accommodation seemed almost too comfortable for men who knew camp life."

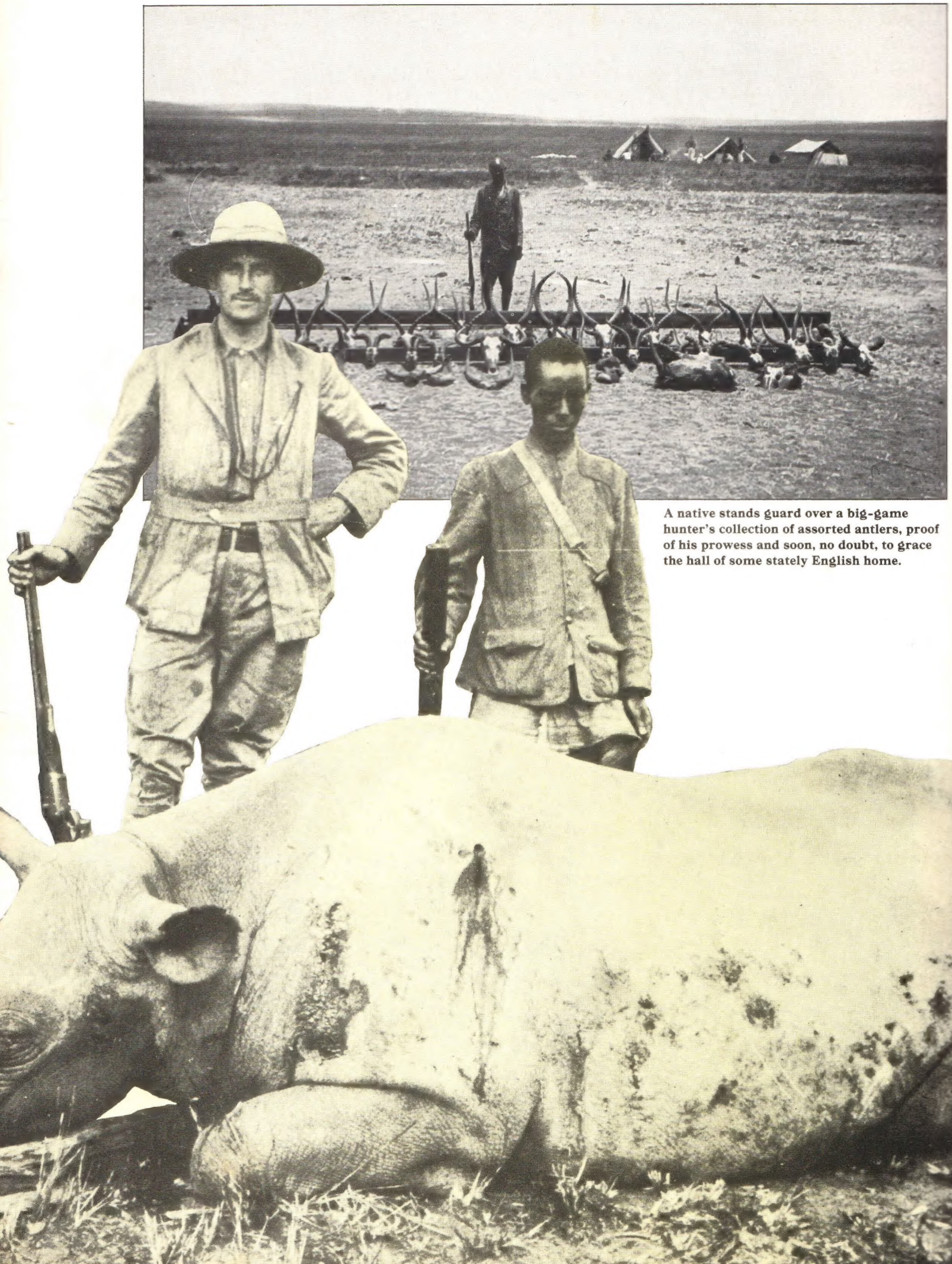
Safaris were indeed becoming easier, and by the 1920s, luxury hunts, with electricity generators and meal-time wines, closed the era of the pioneers.

The zebra, a gentle gregarious animal usually only a prey to lions, was a popular quarry of big-game hunters who coveted its dramatically striped hide.

Though crocodiles could grow to 20 feet, even a small one like this needed the efforts of sturdy natives to drag it from the river after it had been shot by a European hunter.



White hunter and black tracker pose together over the carcass of a rhinoceros, most dangerous game after buffalo and leopard.



A native stands guard over a big-game hunter's collection of assorted antlers, proof of his prowess and soon, no doubt, to grace the hall of some stately English home.

IV. The Halcyon Days

Carefree Kenya certainly was in the beginning, in spite of the hard work and financial worry of trying to squeeze a living out of the East African bush. The corrugated iron shanties gave way to stone-walled country houses, many with half-timbered Elizabethan-style façades overlooking terraces, lawns and formal gardens. The highlands had begun to develop the relaxed life-style that was soon to win the region the nickname of "the happy valley."

Sport thrived: Kenya's first cricket match was held in Nairobi in 1899, and tennis, football and golf soon followed. The icy streams of the Aberdare mountains were stocked up with New Zealand trout, and fly-fishing became a rage. And many a frosty morning on the uplands echoed to the tinny blare of a hunting horn as yelping hounds gave chase to a jackal, while scarlet-coated huntsmen hallooed in their wake.

Pig-sticking – with wart-hogs instead of pigs – was adopted as fervently by the Anglo-Africans as it had been by the Anglo-Indians." I should think," wrote Winston Churchill after an afternoon of such sport in 1907, "that the most accomplished member of the Meerut Tent Club would admit the courage and ferocity of the African wart-hog, and the extreme roughness of the country . . . make pig-sticking in East Africa a sport which would well deserve his serious and appreciative attention."

The game was plentiful, the skies were wide, and nobody cared if the trains didn't run on time. Indeed, it was established practice for several years that if a passenger saw a lion anywhere near the railway track he would stop the train and organize a quick safari; and when Theodore Roosevelt visited Kenya in 1910 he rode on the cow-catcher for hours at a time roaring with delight at the sight of some of the finest game in Africa.

But of course it could not last. By and by poorer emigrants arrived. Dour Afrikaners trekked in from the south to lay claim to the latest version of their Promised Land, and – in ominously swelling numbers – the wives and the civil servants came to extend the long arm of England, Home and Duty along the railway line, imposing new restrictions upon early Arcadian freedom. In 1901, before Delamere settled there, only 13 white settlers lived in the whole of Kenya. Ten years later there were 3,000 and 20 years after, when Kenya had become one of the "Homes Fit for Heroes" in which those British who had survived the First World War might settle in well-earned comfort, there were 9,000. Before Kenya achieved its independence in the 1950s, the figure would rise to over 40,000.

Although these were not large numbers, their impact was tremendous. By their mere presence, the settlers brought into the open the hidden clash of interest in the colonial concept of the "dual mandate" – between the need to make the territory pay its way through white enterprise and the desire to protect the material and moral rights of the African inhabitants. By 1921, while Uganda was permitted to continue in its quiet old Protectorate status, safely exempt from white settlement, the presence of a dominant white minority in Kenya was already posing problems for the government in London; these led to Kenya's designation as a Crown Colony, with the correspondingly closer administrative control implied in that classification.

The problems had two aspects: firstly, there was the clash of settler and African interests on the spot. Secondly, there was the conflict of both these parties with the government, which felt obliged either to hold aloof or to take the part of the Africans against the whites on the grounds that the natives were the more defenceless of the two. "Primarily", said a Colonial Office statement in 1923, "Kenya is an African territory [where] the interests of the African natives must be paramount." But that meant that the interests of the whites, which had seemed so important only 20 years before had to take second place – a position the white settlers were not disposed to accept without a fight.

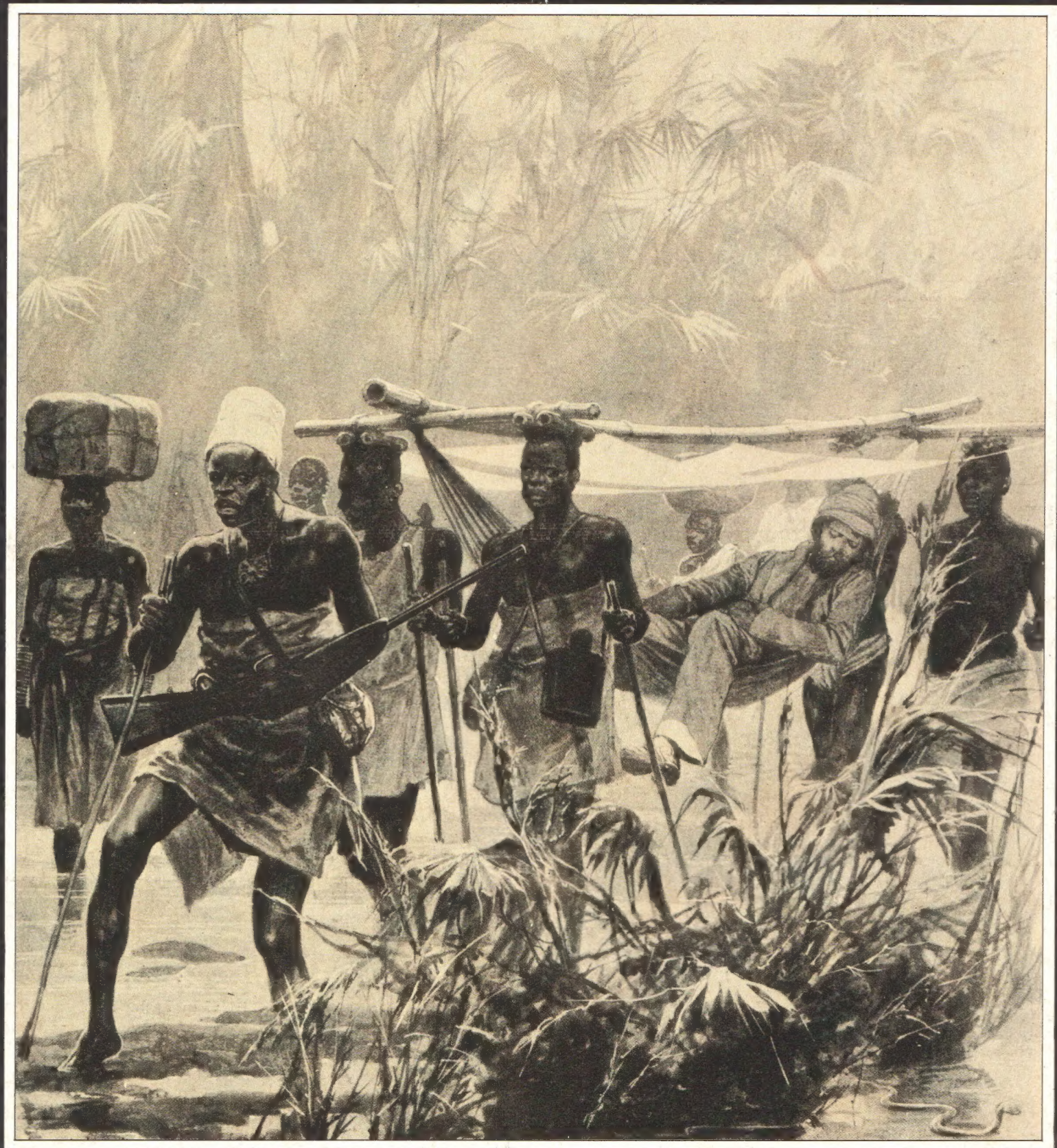
At the heart of the whole question was a crucial, understandable but finally tragic muddle about land. In the early days of Kenya settlement, neither the government nor the settlers had understood the significance of land to the Africans. To them, East Africa had seemed vast and empty, peopled only by nomadic herdsmen like the Masai or shifting cultivators like the Kikuyu tribesmen whom the Masai were threatening to wipe out. Settlers and government alike knew little and cared less about Masai notions of tribal territory or the Kikuyu need for large tracts of fallow land to which they could move when the fertility of a cultivated patch had been exhausted. The Europeans saw only that a great deal of land was currently unused, that the standards of farming were hopelessly inefficient, and that tribal warfare was a menace to everybody's lives and livelihood. The whites were filled with righteous virtue by the thought that their presence had delivered the Africans from tribal warfare, as well as from the slave-trade. Moreover, in the confident morality of the day, it seemed only right that whoever might make the best of the apparently wasted resources of the territory should have the freedom to do so.

But to the Africans all this was both a revolution and a humiliation. Between 1902 and the First World War, 16,000 square miles of the finest land in Kenya – nearly a quarter of the colony's total arable land – was expropriated solely for European use. A Crown Lands Ordinance gave the Governor the right to "grant, lease or otherwise alienate in His Majesty's behalf any Crown lands for any purpose and on any terms and conditions as he may think fit." Half a century later those 16,000 square miles of the White Highlands still held some 7,000 farmers and their families, while nearly six million Africans survived in the remaining 50,000 square miles. It was then that the land-hunger of the exploding African population exacted grim vengeance in the violent anti-European cult of Mau-Mau in the years after World War II.

But in the early years of the century, when the scramble for Africa had just been completed and the likes of Lord Delamere arrived in the Kenya highlands with the light of adventure in their eyes, that grim outcome was not just somewhere over the hill – it was virtually inconceivable. Those were self-evidently halcyon days. The slave-trade was ended, the Nile was secure, prosperity was advancing and the Raj was supreme. The world in Kenya seemed young and fresh. Perhaps, some dared to think, another Australia or Canada had been born? It was not their fault they were not blessed with the foresight to see in their good fortune the harbinger of their own doom ❧

A "polonaise" or walking dress, 1778

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



WHITE MAN'S GRAVE
WINNING WEST AFRICA'S FEVER-RIDDEN HINTERLAND